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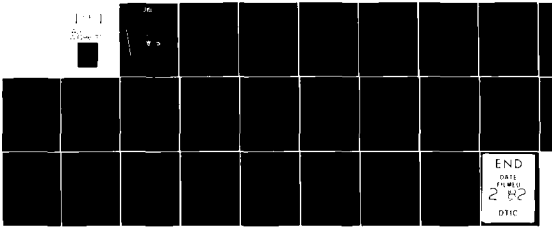

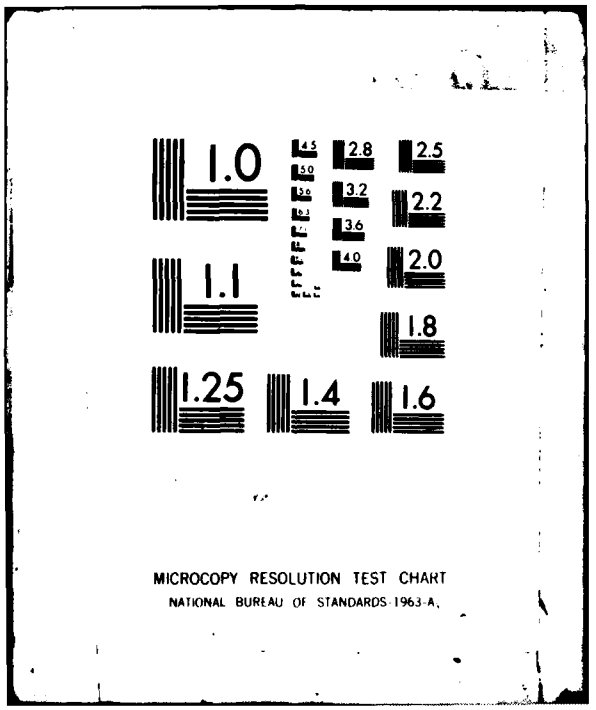
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THE STRATEGIC PROCESS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR POLICY AND STRATEGY IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

by

William O. Staudenmaier

24 December 1981

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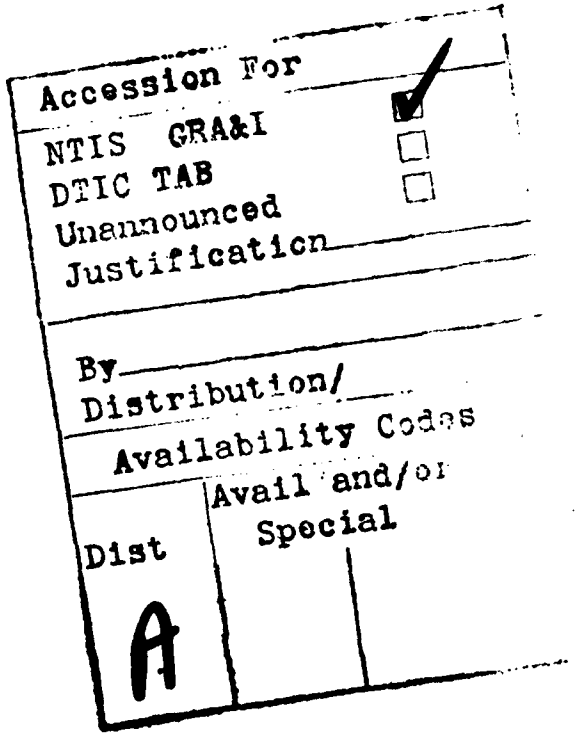


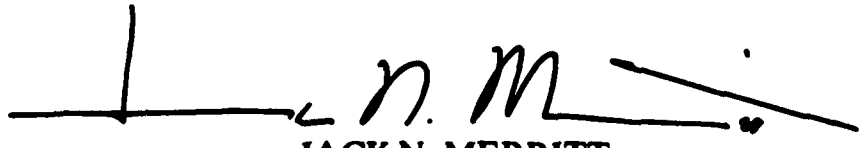
FOREWORD

This memorandum evolved from the Military Policy Symposium on "US Strategic Interests in Southwest Asia: A Long-Term Commitment?" which was sponsored by the Strategic Studies Institute in October 1981. During the Symposium, academic and government experts discussed a number of issues concerning this area which will have a continuing impact on US strategy.

This memorandum examines the interrelationship of the political objectives, security policy, and military strategy as it pertains to achieving US national interests in Southwest Asia. The author reviews the major differences between Force Development Planning and Operational Planning and postulates that a lack of understanding of these differences among policymakers and strategists causes disconnects between objectives, policies, and strategy. He, then, introduces and discusses six strategic guidelines that have the potential to mitigate the adverse strategic effect of disconnects in the strategic process in the context of Southwest Asia. The author concludes that potential policy-strategy disconnects could constrain the United States should military force be needed to secure US national interests in Southwest Asia.

The Strategic Issues Research Memoranda program of the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, provides a means for timely dissemination of analytical papers which are not constrained by format or conformity with institutional policy. These memoranda are prepared on subjects of current importance in areas related to the author's professional work.

This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.



JACK N. MERRITT
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Commandant

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

COLONEL WILLIAM O. STAUDENMAIER has been assigned to the Strategic Studies Institute since his graduation from the US Army War College in 1976. Previously he served as a divisional air defense battalion commander in Germany and in various staff assignments at the Department of the Army. Colonel Staudenmaier graduated from the University of Chattanooga and earned a master's degree in public administration from Pennsylvania State University. He has published articles on air defense and military strategy in professional journals and is a contributor to *The Gulf War: Old Conflicts, New Weapons* (forthcoming).

SUMMARY

In the United States, military strategy is founded on the Clausewitzian notion that the use of military force must be directed toward some political purpose. The ascendancy of the political purpose dictates the current conceptual approach to the development of military strategy. Political policy operates at two levels in the strategic process: first, it establishes the political objectives that the strategic concept must achieve; second, policy establishes the framework that shapes and controls strategy. Strategy, itself, is the plan or course of action designed to achieve the objectives of policy in accordance with the policy rules that are established by the political leaders.

Analysis indicates that often political objectives are not stated clearly, resulting in policies that are not compatible with the decision to use military force. This, in turn, makes the translation of the political objectives into military terms by strategists a difficult undertaking. Often political objectives and security policies are inconsistent and the military objective and strategic concept that military planners select are incompatible with the political effect desired.

A study of US objectives, policies, and strategy in Southwest Asia uncovers several potential disconnects in the strategic process. Important factors relating to these potential disconnects are an imperfect understanding of the demands of the various levels of strategy and confusion regarding the chief differences between force development planning and operational planning in the context of US strategy in Southwest Asia.

Strategic guidelines are needed to integrate more closely policy and strategy. Six strategic guidelines are developed and discussed in terms of their impact on military planning in Southwest Asia. These guidelines—Independence of Action, Dislocation, Flexibility, Selectivity, Preparedness, and Integration—are not considered to be in final form; rather they are a first approximation to be refined later.

Because of potential policy-strategy disconnects, the United States could be constrained in the application of military power to achieve its political objectives in Southwest Asia. The maintenance of a continuous dialogue between the policymaker and military

strategist must be a matter of first priority. It is imperative that the policymaker and military strategist remain close partners in the strategic process or the result will be strategic discord and the failure of the United States to achieve its political objectives or secure its national interests in Southwest Asia or elsewhere.

THE STRATEGIC PROCESS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR POLICY AND STRATEGY IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

On January 23, 1980, President Carter declared that the Persian Gulf was a vital interest of the United States and that any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the region would be repelled by any means necessary, including the use of military force. The US vital interest of which the President spoke was continued access to Persian Gulf oil. Subsequent Carter Administration statements extended the scope of the doctrine from its initial orientation on the Soviet threat following the invasion of Afghanistan to threats to the oil fields emanating from intraregional warfare such as that posed by the Iran-Iraq War. The Reagan Administration continued these policies and voiced an additional concern over loss of oil production resulting from internal instability, particularly in Saudi Arabia.[1]

The purpose of this paper is to explore some of the major military considerations that impinge on the development of a military strategy to secure and protect US national interests in Southwest Asia. Central to this purpose is a consideration of the following questions:

- What are the political objectives of US national strategy?
- What policies have been established to guide the development of US military strategy in Southwest Asia?

• What are the major military factors bearing on Southwest Asian strategy?

These questions center on the critical interrelationship between political policy and military strategy. In the United States, military strategy is founded on the Clausewitzian notion that the use of the military instrument must be directed toward some political purpose. The ascendancy of the political purpose dictates the current conceptual approach to the development of military strategy. Political policy operates at two levels in the strategic process: first, it establishes the political objectives that the strategic concept must achieve; second, policy sets the rules that shape and control strategy. Strategy, itself, is the plan or course of action designed to achieve the objectives of policy in accordance with the "policy rules" that are established by the political leadership.

The following example will serve to illustrate this important strategic fundamental. In the development of a nuclear strategy during the 1960's, the political objective—deterrence—was established by the policymakers, who also decided that the US nuclear capability would not be used in a preemptive first strike mode.[2] Given this objective and policy, the military strategists developed a strategy called Assured Destruction. In developing the strategy of Assured Destruction, the strategists translated the political objective—deterrence—into military terms. Operationalized, Assured Destruction meant that the United States should have the retaliatory capability to destroy 20-25 percent of the Soviet population and about 50 percent of their industry, after absorbing a Soviet nuclear attack. This level of destruction, it was thought by US strategists, should constitute an effective deterrent.[3] Because the policy precluded a first strike, the military planners developed a strategic concept based on retaliation and redundancy. The United States would maintain a TRIAD of survivable strategic nuclear forces—land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine launched ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers—each leg of which would have the capability to effect the required level of damage. Our nuclear strategy has since become more sophisticated, but at bedrock it is still based on Assured Destruction.[4]

Although this example clearly shows the importance of the policy-strategy interface, frequently political objectives are not stated so clearly, resulting in policies that are not compatible with the decision to use military force. In turn, this makes the

translation of the political objectives into military terms by the strategists a difficult challenge. Often political objectives and security policies are inconsistent and the military objective and strategic concept that military planners select are incompatible with the political effect desired.

POLITICAL OBJECTIVES IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

Political objectives of foreign policy are based on US national interests, which may be defined as political, economic or strategic concerns that are of some importance to the United States. Fundamental categories of national interest are the survival of the United States and the defense of US territory, the maintenance or enhancement of the US standard of living, and the promotion of a stable world sympathetic to contemporary American values.[5] The United States has interests in each of these categories in Southwest Asia. Although the United States is virtually invulnerable to a conventional invasion of its territory, its survival is threatened by the vast nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union. Fortunately, the USSR is similarly vulnerable to nuclear attack. This mutual vulnerability has led the superpowers to avoid carefully situations which could result in a direct confrontation between their respective armed forces. Nuclear parity, the emergence of the Soviet Union as a global naval, if not military power, and the shock of the invasion of Afghanistan has led to concern that potentially Southwest Asia could be the strategic arena in which the tacit, mutual policy of conflict avoidance might collapse, either through accident or miscalculation. The maintenance or enhancement of the US standard of living requires that the United States retain continued access to Persian Gulf oil for itself and its NATO and Japanese allies. Internal and regional instability in Southwest Asia has the potential to negate President Reagan's search for ". . . a world hospitable to our society and ideals."[6]

National interests are not all of uniform importance, nor are they all pursued with equal intensity. Often the language that has been used to express the intensity of a US national interest is imprecise—President Carter declared that Southwest Asia is a *vital* interest of the United States. Exactly what the term vital means has rarely been explained. Does vital mean that the interest is of such importance that the United States would risk escalation to nuclear

warfare to protect it or does it mean that the United States would use military force short of nuclear war? These are not academic questions, because they directly impact on the development of military strategy. The way that this question is answered regarding US national interests in Southwest Asia will have profound strategic implications. The intensity with which US interests in Southwest Asia will be pursued must be conveyed to the military strategist early in the planning process by the civilian policymaker. All too often, however, the policy guidance is not forthcoming before the event.[7] In this case, the military strategist must make assumptions regarding the intensity of effort and degree of risk that the nation might be willing to take to secure its national interests. It must be emphasized that this question of intensity of interest which dictates both military effort and risk are the province of the statesman, not the soldier.

Not only are interests not pursued with uniform vigor, they are often in competition with one another. In Southwest Asia, the Western need for oil requires that access to Persian Gulf oil be assured, while the US commitment to Israeli security complicates the entire issue. Because anytime the superpowers are involved in regional disputes the issue of nuclear war is also present, the challenge to US military strategists is to insure Western access to Persian Gulf oil, while underwriting Israeli security, and not precipitating a nuclear war with the USSR.

The US national objectives that derive from the US national interests in Southwest Asia are shown in Figure 1. Harold Brown gave the most cogent explication of US interests and objectives in the Persian Gulf-Southwest Asian region in his March 6, 1980 major policy address before the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City, when he stated that they were ". . . quite simply: to assure access to adequate oil supplies; to resist Soviet expansion; to promote stability in the region; and to advance the Middle East peace process, while ensuring (and indeed in order to help ensure) the continued security of the State of Israel."[8]

Once national objectives have been determined that will achieve US interests, analytically it is appropriate to consider the threats to the interests and objectives. (In reality, interests, objectives, and threats are considered concurrently.) Essentially, there are three general types of threat that could disrupt US and Western access to Persian Gulf: overt Soviet attack on the oil fields, intraregional

Categories of National Interest	Political Objectives
Survival and Defense of US Territory	· Deterrence of Nuclear War · Nonproliferation
Economic Well Being	· Retain Access to Oil and Other Natural Resources · Continue Free Passage Over International Air/Sea Routes · Maintain and Expand Trade and Investments
World Order	· Maintain US Credibility and Regional Influence · Limit Soviet Influence in Southwest Asia · Reduce Threat of Insurgency · Prevent the Outbreak of Hostilities in Region Threatening to Western Nations · Settle Arab-Israeli Dispute Without Losing Moderate Arab States

Figure 1. US National Objectives in Southwest Asia

warfare such as the Iran-Iraq War, and internal instability which results in reduction of oil production.[9] Potentially the most serious, but perhaps least likely, of these threats would be a Soviet invasion of Iran, aimed at the Khuzistan oil fields and control of the Straits of Hormuz, resulting from the disintegration of Iran. Not only would such a successful invasion potentially deny the West access to Iranian oil, but it would also provide the Soviets with the further strategic advantage of the control of the Straits of Hormuz through which pass daily much of the West's oil. Although the current Iran-Iraq War has led to a partial disruption in the flow of oil from those two countries, it has not led to the more serious consequence of the closing of the Straits of Hormuz. If, however, an intraregional conflict erupted that involved Saudi Arabia or Oman, much more ominous consequences for the West could result. Most

likely, however, would be a significant disruption in the production or distribution of oil that could result from internal instability in the Gulf States, caused by either the social strains of too rapid modernization or by the religious zeal of the fundamentalist Islamic movement.[10] Each of these threats would require a strategically tailored response.

The focus of these threats is the oil fields of the Persian Gulf. These oil fields are as vulnerable as they are significant. Oil storage facilities, well heads, pipelines, pumping stations and port terminals are all soft targets—targets that are easily damaged or destroyed. No less vulnerable are the oil tankers that must pass through the narrow sea lanes of the Persian Gulf to reach the open seas. The oil fields and their associated installations are vulnerable to attack from a wide variety of military means; from air attacks as were demonstrated by both Iran and Iraq to sabotage caused by terrorists against petroleum complexes on land or oil tankers at sea. The difficulty of restoring oil facilities to operation once damaged magnifies and complicates the problem, whether one is intent on defending the oil fields or upon seizing them. Civil disasters in oil fields have demonstrated that repairs to damaged oil facilities are dangerous, time-consuming, and expensive.[11] Given the US national interests and objectives in the region and the threats to them, the strategist is now ready to consider the policies that are needed to guide the development of US military strategy in Southwest Asia.

INTERRELATION OF POLICY AND STRATEGY

Theoretically, after the national interests have been identified and national objectives selected that will insure them, a national strategy may be developed. Unfortunately, national strategy, which may be defined as the coordinated employment of the total resources of a nation to achieve its national objectives, has seldom been articulated, let alone achieved. Here again, the military strategist must be left to his own devices to integrate the use of the military element of national power with its other constituent elements—political, economic, technological, and psychosocial. No easy job.[12] Clearly some of the nonmilitary elements of a national strategy aimed at Southwest Asia would be the creation of an adequate petroleum stockpile, the diversification of oil supply,

the implementation of energy conservation measures, and the development of energy alternatives.[13] The success of these programs would have implications for the military planner struggling to construct a rational military strategy.

Security policies that establish the political framework within which strategy must operate have a tremendous impact on the military planner. An intractable strategic problem today is to insure that the political objective, security policy, and military strategy are in agreement. This was not much of a problem when the policymaker and chief military strategist were combined in one man—the soldier king. Napoleonic warfare best exemplified this model. The coordination of policy and strategy became more difficult when the policymaker and strategist were separated such as is the case in most modern democratic nations—and as strategy became much more complex. With the advent of the nuclear era, strategy and military affairs in general have become central routine functions of the governments of most developed nations. Policy and strategy in the classical sense operated only in wartime and were initiated at the declaration of war and terminated at war's end.[14] Today, however, conflict has become more complicated and defense policy and strategy is a continuing, open-ended unfolding process.[15] In the post-World War II world, strategy could no longer be narrowly interpreted as the Clausewitzian use of battles to achieve victory in war. Its meaning has had to be broadened to include not only preparation for war, but since the development of thermonuclear weapons, military strategy has also had to consider how military force or the threat of military force could prevent war.

General Andre Beaufre, the renowned French strategist, postulated that military strategy functions at two levels—overall strategy and operational strategy.[16] Overall strategy, called National Military Strategy in the United States, deals with the comprehensive direction of military force in the development of an integrated global strategy. One of its primary tasks is to translate political objectives into military objectives, broad strategic concepts, and a supporting force structure. Operational strategy takes these objectives and strategic concepts and in accordance with doctrine harmonizes the strategic requirements with tactical and logistic capabilities. It consists of one or more interrelated campaign plans designed to achieve military objectives within the framework of security policy.

Security policies affect both subdivisions of military strategy. At the national military strategy level the decision to use force and to terminate conflict are the principal concerns of the President and his policy advisors. The policy regarding nuclear weapons and the decision to use them or to withhold them is also the President's responsibility. The implied policy in the Carter Doctrine of January 1980 that military force might be used in the Persian Gulf to secure US vital interests is enough to enable military strategists to begin their task, but the policymaker must also communicate to the military planner the conditions required in order to terminate the conflict. This is more than just a statement of the objective. For example, in the Suez Crisis of 1956, the failure of the English and French policymakers to clearly enunciate their political objective and to think through the political consequences of the use of military force was largely responsible for that debacle. The political objective conveyed to the military was that the Suez Canal must be opened to all international traffic. The unarticulated objective (to the military, at least), that Prime Minister Eden hoped to achieve, was nothing short of the overthrow of Nasser. The military conditions required to achieve the objective of opening the Suez Canal and those required to topple Nasser were vastly different. For example, to overthrow Nasser would require a much larger force than one designed simply for the seizure of the Suez Canal, since a march on Cairo and the partial occupation of Egypt would probably be required. This, in turn, has enormous logistic requirements which would dictate the need of a large port—perhaps Alexandria. Thus, the strategic concept to accomplish these two diverse objectives would be quite different. Even if the objective to depose Nasser had been accurately transmitted to the military planners, it would still not be enough. The military strategist must know the condition that was desired after Nasser fell, for this would determine the character and objective of the military plan.[17]

In the context of Southwest Asia the need for a careful and precise definition of conflict termination conditions is especially crucial. Consider, for example, the hypothetical case of a Soviet invasion of Iran. Would the conflict be considered successful *only* if the Soviets withdrew their forces completely from Iran? Would we consider our national interests protected if the Soviets only occupied Azerbaijan? Whatever the answer the policymaker gives

to these questions, the guidance must be provided to the military strategist at the beginning of the strategic process. Similar policy guidelines are needed for other scenarios as well. The military strategist also has responsibilities in his policy-strategy dialogue. Current US policy does not preclude first use of theater nuclear weapons, and the President reserves to himself the decision to initiate the first use of nuclear weapons. Given this general theater nuclear policy, the prudent military planner, even while developing a strategy relying on conventional means, would surely consider the nuclear option, for deterrence as well as war-fighting purposes. The President and his key policy advisors must know in advance the assumptions made by the military planner regarding the use of nuclear weapons, if any, in any contingency plans that might be developed to deal with the threats to US interests in Southwest Asia.

Other policies must also be considered in the development of operational strategy. The national policy towards mobilization is among the most important. Two key variables with regard to any military strategy are deployment and sustainability.[18] The strategy of Realistic Deterrence, in 1973, introduced the Total Force Concept, which, simply stated, was designed to increase the capability of the US active duty force by the addition of US National Guard and Reserves performing some missions previously allocated to active duty forces.[19] The result of this policy has been that the active component is structured mainly with combat forces and the Reserve Components are structured heavily towards combat support and combat service support. The upshot of this situation is the Army and, to a lesser degree, the other Services must rely on their Reserve Components for deployability and sustainability support. The extent of support required is dictated by the geographical scope, intensity, and duration of combat. Virtually any US military operation will require some degree of Reserve Component mobilization. The President has the authority to order partial mobilization, which is the mobilization of Reserve Component units or individuals required for a contingency. Under this authority, the President may call up to 100,000 reservists to active duty; more extensive callups, such as full or total mobilization, require action by Congress.[20] Policy guidance must also be given regarding the mobilization of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet and the expansion of the sealift force which would involve the

Military Sealift Command, the Ready Reserve Fleet, the National Defense Reserve Fleet, and the Sealift Readiness Program. The Civil Reserve Air Fleet and the several sealift programs augment the active strategic mobility forces during periods of emergency. So policy guidance regarding mobilization and availability of overflight and landing rights is required early in the planning process by the military strategist.

The Southwest Asian strategic situation also requires policy guidance regarding forward deployment. The United States currently forward deploys ground forces in Western Europe and Korea; unfortunately, US ground force forward deployment during peacetime in Southwest Asia runs counter to the political sensitivities in that area.[21] Since forward deployment is precluded, and because of the vast distances involved, it is of paramount importance to act on strategic warning—even ambiguous strategic warning—in countering the threats to US interests in the Persian Gulf. The nation that can project force into the region first will have the advantage, particularly in a crisis involving the superpowers. If the military strategist can rely on an early decision to deploy forces forward in the region, his strategic flexibility is greatly increased, otherwise some degree of prepositioning of ground forces or equipment in the operational area, either ashore or afloat, seems indicated.

This discussion of the importance of timely policy guidance to the military strategist is meant to be illustrative and not exhaustive. It is not a one-way street—the military strategist has a responsibility to establish a dialogue with the policymaker in the first instance to point out the strategic consequences of the policy guidance and secondly to seek policy guidance on strategic matters where it is not forthcoming.

FORCE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

In the previous section a distinction was made between the national military strategy level and the operational level of strategy. Still another distinction must be made. The postwar switch in the focus of military strategy from the battlefield to preparation for war that was noted earlier indicates that preparation for war is as important or perhaps even more important than warfare itself. Military strategic planning deals not only with the use of force in

war, but with peacetime design and development of military force structure.[22] Strategic planning that deals with the use of force on the battlefield is termed operational planning and strategic planning that deals with peacetime force building is called force planning. Failing to distinguish between these two types of planning is the source of much confusion in the contemporary strategic debate, particularly regarding the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force. The current debate on US strategy in Southwest Asia is more of a force planning debate than one of operational strategy. There seems to be much concern over the capability of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force and very little concern over what it is supposed to accomplish once it arrives in the theater of operations.

The major difference between the two planning systems is that operational planning centers on the *employment* of military forces in the near term (1-2 years), while the force planning system develops military *capabilities* for the midterm (3-10 years). Thus, operational planning deals with developing strategic concepts and plans to employ military force, and force planning, on the other hand, is involved in the programing and allocation of military resources. Operational strategy is based on plausible regional scenarios that are likely to occur in the near term and considers only existing forces, under conditions of both mobilization and nonmobilization. Force planning is based on global scenarios designed to test US military capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict; it considers forces that are programed for the future at various levels of risk. These dichotomous strategic planning interests are reflected in the organization of the Department of Defense. Operational planning is largely the responsibility of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and of the Unified Commanders. The strategic force planning process is primarily the responsibility of the Department of Defense and of the military Services—Army, Navy, and Air Force. There is, of course, legitimate overlap between the two systems; however, the differences in timeframe of interest to the two systems, combined with the differences in perspective wherein the Joint Chiefs of Staff and operational commanders are concerned with the development of short-term operational strategy and the Department of Defense and Services are primarily involved in the allocation of resources to support a midrange strategy, has clearly led to disconnects between the two systems.

The seriousness of these disconnects has been mitigated somewhat by emergence of a coordinative level of military strategy that attempts to link the military concepts established by the national military strategy with the contingency plans of the operational theater commanders. It also develops the strategy and programs needed to build the force structure necessary to implement the midrange military strategy. Unfortunately, this coordinative level has yet to be fully developed.

In the context of Southwest Asian military strategy, the open literature often fails to distinguish between the two types of planning, often mistaking the one for the other. Frequently, it is asserted that the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force is a "paper organization" and the divisions that would be attached to it are nonexistent. On the contrary, these units do exist, but they are not additive to the reinforcement requirements of NATO or Northeast Asia. This means that there is a possibility of dual commitment of some of these units should simultaneous contingencies occur in either of these areas and Southwest Asia. This possibility is termed risk. To reduce risks, it would be necessary to add divisions to the current force structure, but adding Army divisions within the All-Volunteer Army policy might not be possible. But, if simultaneous crises do not occur, then the entire Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force forces would be available for employment in the Persian Gulf region. The constraints on the deployment and sustainability of the force, however, are real and resist resolution.

Strategies that are designed for force planning must consider the most demanding or most threatening scenario to US national interests. In Southwest Asia this is obviously a Soviet invasion of Iran. The force development philosophy assumes that if the United States can develop combat forces and strategic mobility assets sufficient to deter or defeat such a hypothetical Soviet invasion, the force structure generated by this most militarily demanding scenario will also be adequate for less demanding scenarios, such as intervention in an intraregional war or providing assistance to a regional nation threatened with an insurgency. Once this midrange force has been sized, it is compared to existing capabilities to determine the force requirements. What sometimes results is a mismatch between the desired strategy and the military capabilities needed to fully implement it.

This strategy-capabilities mismatch often occurs because,

although strategies may be changed with the stroke of a pen, it takes considerably longer to develop the forces, weapons, doctrine, and training needed to implement them. Strategic force planning is constrained by limited resources both in money and trained manpower, by the inertia of the current force structure, which is the result of decisions made 5-10 years in the past, by the uncertainty regarding the strategic requirements of the future, and by the lag time that exists from the time a strategic requirement has been validated to the fielding of the required capability. Andre Beaufre commented on the uncertain and complex tasks facing strategists in the modern era when he wrote that:

> The strategist is like a surgeon called upon to operate upon a sick person who is growing continuously and with extreme rapidity and of whose detailed anatomy he is not sure; his operating table is in a state of perpetual motion and he must have ordered the instruments he is to use five years beforehand.[23]

Because of these constraints, the solution to the strategy-capabilities mismatch is often unsatisfying. Another alternative might be to lower the strategic demands on current resources. This would require a lowering of sights—the realignment of near-term political and military objectives to coincide with near-term resources. This balancing of the near-term strategic equation by reducing near-term objectives may be considered by some defense analysts as unsatisfactory. These critics would argue that the United States should not allow national security policy to be constrained by a lack of adequate resources. This might be a valid argument if midterm objectives were similarly constrained. They need not be. If we do not balance our near-term objectives and capabilities, we must be prepared to accept increased risks should deterrence fail—and the other side of the increased risk coin is increased probability of failure. As the debate over the near-term objectives-strategy mismatch is being conducted, solutions to operational shortcomings must be pursued in the midterm budgeting process, lest we suffer the same operational shortcomings at the "end" of the current 5-Year Defense Program.

While the force development system develops the programs demanded by the midterm strategy, efforts to reduce current operational shortfalls must continue apace. For example, in the context of Southwest Asia, diplomatic negotiations must achieve

the overflight rights and access to intermediate staging bases required for the successful implementation of the strategy. The active support of US friends and allies, particularly NATO and Japan, must be sought. The military capability of regional states can be enhanced by security assistance, such as the Reagan programs for Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The United States can also maintain a naval force presence in the Indian Ocean not only to secure the critical sea lanes of communication, but also to demonstrate US military power without requiring a large American military force on the Arabian Peninsula. Periodic joint training exercises also bolster the naval force presence with the temporary deployment of US ground forces to the region. The provision of four AWACS to Saudi Arabia at the onset of the Iran-Iraq War demonstrates the importance of force presence. All of these strategic concepts of the use of military force in peacetime not only will enhance the US capability for war fighting, but also have deterrent value.

The operational strategist must also develop plans based only on existing capabilities in the event conflict should literally erupt in the region tomorrow. In developing such a strategy a major obstacle facing contemporary US planners is to insure that the security policy, national military strategy, and operational strategy are in consonance, which the discussion thus far has suggested is no easy task. In seeking to integrate policy and strategy, guidelines which are applicable to the development of both political policy and military strategy would be helpful.

The establishment of such guidelines is difficult because a general theory of the comprehensive use of military power in peace and war does not now exist in the United States—or anywhere else for that matter. Such guidelines, even in the absence of a unifying military theory, would be highly desirable because before any unity of strategic effort can be achieved there must be common understanding and shared values among military strategists and policymakers at all levels. This attempt to harmonize security policy and military strategy is not intended to replace the traditional principles of war, which are appropriate to tactical considerations on the battlefield. Nor is the forthcoming listing of strategic guidelines to be considered comprehensive or final; rather it is a first approximation, hopefully, to be later refined. These guidelines will be discussed in the context of the current strategic environment of Southwest Asia.

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

The first general guideline is Independence of Action.[24] This precept enjoins the United States to chart its own course, surrendering only that degree of sovereignty necessary to achieve its national objectives and to secure its own national interests. The United States must not adhere to narrow defensive strategies alone, but must seek out opportunities and creative strategies. We must not allow the successes of our adversaries to push us into ill-considered policies or strategies for which we may be unprepared simply because we feel we have to do something.

To operationalize this guideline in the context of developing strategy for Southwest Asia, the United States must neither disregard the Soviet threat to the region nor conform to it unthinkingly. Therefore, while the United States should strongly consider a Soviet military threat to the Persian Gulf oil fields and the Straits of Hormuz, this threat must not be the sole or even primary thrust of the US military strategy for the region. The US policy should clearly indicate to the Soviet Union that there are limits to the military steps that they can take in the Persian Gulf without triggering an aggressive US riposte. The Carter Doctrine does this; however, it must be backed up by an operational strategy that builds on the strategic factors which favor the United States.

There are two such factors—the first is an asymmetry of national interest which favors the United States and its allies and the second is strategic warning.[25] Access to oil in the Persian Gulf is clearly more vital to the Western nations than it is to the Soviet Union at the present time—nor do there appear to be any other compelling Soviet interests that could redress this asymmetry. The presence of the US fleet in the Indian Ocean, the four AWACS provided to Saudi Arabia, the negotiations for base facilities in the region, and the force development initiatives regarding the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force all reinforce the credibility of the US interests. Strategic warning, measured in weeks rather than days, can be expected in the region, particularly if the Soviets seriously contemplate an invasion of Iran. The readiness status of the Soviet forces which border Iran virtually guarantee the United States a few weeks warning, because some degree of Soviet mobilization would be required to ready these troops for action. Furthermore, the characteristics of the operational theater would seem to indicate

that the Soviets would also move slowly and in stages through the rugged, easily interdicted Zagros Mountains. Distances from the Soviet Union also indicate that Soviet Frontal Aviation would have to establish forward bases in Iran before an invasion of the Khuzistan oil fields could be mounted either by ground or airborne forces. This is not to say that the strategic calculus would favor the United States—it does not, because of the vast distances that the United States would be required to cover before it even arrived in the operational area. Nonetheless, the strategic factors, on balance, could induce enough uncertainty in the mind of a Soviet planner to make the invasion of Iran a low priority affair.

A policy based on a coalition approach and deterrence could induce even more uncertainty in the mind of a Soviet planner contemplating the use of military force in Southwest Asia. But independence of action reminds the policymaker to surrender only that degree of sovereignty to its allies or friends in the region that is essential for the successful execution of its strategy. To do otherwise in the constantly shifting strategic environment of the area would potentially induce a rigidity in our strategy that would be comparable to the problems now facing the United States in NATO. By committing virtually the entire force structure to a single scenario in Western Europe, the United States has needlessly constrained itself from being able to respond to the more likely challenges in Southwest Asia and elsewhere in the Third World. There are, however, options available within the constraints of current policy that could be useful.

Naval cooperation with France, Great Britain, and Australia in the Indian Ocean strengthens the Western naval position and security assistance programs strengthen indigenous governments, although this latter policy would be more relevant to threats other than the Soviet Union. Perhaps, less likely, but potentially more significant against a Soviet military threat to the region would be entering into some sort of bilateral approach to the military problems of the region with Turkey and Pakistan. These strategically important countries could have a considerable dampening effect on Soviet military plans because of their strategically advantageous flanking positions. Problems—political, in the case of Turkey, and credibility, in the case of Pakistan, and propinquity to the Soviet Union for both—militate against the success of such an approach.

Deterrence could be enhanced by the threat of horizontal or vertical escalation. In the context of Southwest Asian policy and strategy, the guideline—dislocation—is concerned with war-widening options. Dislocation, or what Clausewitz called the center of gravity, is the unifying concept behind Liddell Hart's strategy of the indirect approach, which seeks to attack the enemy at his most vulnerable point; the point that would so shock the enemy that it would cause his defeat—a sort of strategic jujitsu. That these guidelines have applicability for the Soviets as well as the United States is illustrated by the fact that many military analysts believe that the point of dislocation in today's strategic environment for the Western industrial nations and Japan is the Persian Gulf.

Early in the debate over Southwest Asian strategy, media reports centered on Cuba as a likely point of dislocation to counter a Soviet invasion aimed at the Persian Gulf. The idea being that by posing a threat to Soviet interests and prestige in this area, the Soviets would be deterred from military activity in Southwest Asia. Attacking Soviet interests at the apogee of US power to deter threats to US interests at the perigee of our power projection capabilities has a certain appeal. This search for areas of Soviet strategic vulnerabilities is motivated, in part at least, by the relative deployability and sustainability weakness of the current force structure, considering the demands of strategy in Southwest Asia, particularly in terms of Soviet military initiatives. This search for the strategic initiative by US military planners can be termed the "Gallipoli syndrome." Just as the allied expedition at Gallipoli in World War I was conceived by Winston Churchill to regain the initiative after the allies were bogged down in bloody fighting on the Western Front, these new strategic suggestions represent a search for the initiative.

Before adopting any of these "win quick" schemes for Southwest Asia, US strategists must fully consider the ramifications of horizontal escalation. In terms of Southwest Asia, a number of scenarios could develop. First, our NATO allies could become involved in either a direct or supportive role, then the Soviets could put pressure on the Europeans where it hurts most—in Europe. NATO would then have to respond, which would mean that the United States would be involved in two theaters simultaneously putting almost intolerable pressure on the current force structure. Secondly, should other friendly Southwest Asian

countries become involved in assisting the United States to respond throughout the spectrum of conflict in the Persian Gulf, this could be the catalyst for many ethnic or religious factions to renew their efforts towards obtaining autonomy from their central government, (e.g., the Baluchis). Finally, the war-widening initiatives that are often suggested—blockade of Cuba, closing the Bosphorus to Soviet naval movements or attacking the Soviet fleet in the Indian Ocean—do not secure the US access to Persian Gulf oil, although the options escalate the conflict to dangerous proportions.

Similarly, vertical escalation to the use of nuclear weapons also has significant drawbacks. Consider a hypothetical scenario in which the United States made a decision to use theater nuclear weapons to counter a Soviet conventional incursion in the Persian Gulf region. Not only would the United States incur the wrath of the world for initiating the use of nuclear weapons, but the potential of uncontrollable escalation would become a reality conceivably threatening the very survival of the United States—and against a power with as much nuclear clout as the United States. It is one thing to threaten the use of nuclear weapons from a position of strength; to do so to compensate for force structure weaknesses would be intolerable. Therefore, the strategic guideline, dislocation, should not dissuade strategists from seeking to upset the enemy's strategic center of gravity provided they are circumspect in so doing, fully realizing that the geographical breadth of the USSR on the Eurasian continent offers it the advantage of internal lines in terms of reacting to horizontal escalation. All things considered, US policy in this respect in Southwest Asia should be to achieve US political objectives and to secure US national interests without resorting to either horizontal or vertical escalation. However, the public discussion of such alternatives could add to deterrence in the sense of declaratory strategy.

Independence of action and dislocation have centered on a consideration of the Soviet threat to Persian Gulf oil, although that threat may also be the least likely to occur. Flexibility, the third guideline, offers concepts that are applicable not only to the Soviet threat, but also to lesser, more probable threats. Flexibility simply means that policymakers and strategists must not focus on single, rigid scenarios. While force development scenarios can focus on the

most demanding, if least likely, military scenario—a Soviet invasion of Iran or Pakistan—operational strategists must consider a range of more plausible scenarios. The US policy must demonstrate to the nations of the Persian Gulf region that the United States is not solely considering the most demanding threat, but also considers lesser and, perhaps more real, threats that emanate from intraregional strife and internal instability.[26]

Like independence of action earlier, this guideline admonishes US strategists not to tie its Army down to the static, forward defense of NATO. If the armed forces are preparing to fight a single scenario war on the plains of Europe and commit virtually its entire force to that eventuality, then the Soviet Union will have been provided the strategic flexibility to challenge US interests in Southwest Asia and in the Third World with virtual impunity. Because the United States cannot abandon its national interests in Europe, a flexible or multipurpose force will be required because it is unlikely that either its area or time of deployment can be predicted much in advance. A flexible force would be able to concentrate on the demands from the lower end of the spectrum of conflict that are likely to be made in Southwest Asia and the Third World. However, in an era of economic austerity, the United States will not be able to fight "anywhere, anytime;" therefore, the principles of flexibility and selectivity are interlocking.

Selectivity is a guide to the setting of priorities based on the probability of war and the risks of losing should deterrence fail. This is no easy calculation, but if one accepts the argument advanced earlier that the fear of escalation to nuclear warfare by the superpowers will lead to conflict avoidance on their part, then the risk of a Soviet attack aimed at the oil fields of the Persian Gulf is lowered. This same concept would drive the Soviets, if they are intent at destabilizing the region, to use strategies that make use of proxy forces or to foment internal violence within the oil-producing states. Given this assessment, the US policy in the region should be to support the indigenous regimes and to provide economic aid and security assistance funds to enable them to defend themselves. This will be a difficult task because at least one Middle Eastern expert believes that there is a good chance that most of the current governments in the Persian Gulf will collapse before 1990.[27] Another expert suggests that the United States should ". . . employ a selective approach, relying on visible but delicate means of

activity without overreacting with huge emplacements that will only destabilize the local political balance of forces."[28]

One such approach that uses regional forces, accompanied by a low US military profile, relates to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Using this approach, the United States would support the emerging closer military relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, in which Pakistani troops would be stationed in Saudi Arabia. In peacetime, the use of Pakistani troops in Saudi Arabia would be less provocative than the forward deployment of American soldiers. The combination of Saudi wealth, Pakistani military power, and US military technology can serve the national interests of all three nations by providing a measure of stability to Saudi Arabia, by modernizing Pakistan's armed forces, and by helping to safeguard the US and Western interest in access to oil.[29] A strategy based on this policy would include a peacetime US Navy and Air Force presence in the region and should be buttressed by periodic US joint ground force military exercises in the region.

What emerges from a consideration of the first four guidelines is an activist policy based on deterrence, a low US military profile, and a coalition approach. Force development activities are aimed at developing the capabilities needed to meet the operational demands of a Soviet military incursion in the Persian Gulf. A national military strategy of an offshore US military presence in the region, backed by nuclear and conventional strength sufficient to deter, and an operational strategy focused on the strategic problems posed by internal instability in the region round out the parameters of a potential US response to the Southwest Asian strategic problem. Such a policy and strategy would mean that the United States would have to employ forces from its base area. Preparedness, the fifth guideline, is critically concerned with the mobilization and projection of forces. Preparedness involves such things as sustaining the morale and the will of the people, the nation's mobilization readiness, and the ability to project military power overseas.

As was recounted earlier, the need to act on strategic warning requires an early mobilization decision. This mobilization decision is required early because the deployment and sustainability functions performed by the active forces require extensive reinforcement from the Reserve Components for even a modest military operation at a distance from the United States. Unless the

all-volunteer concept can supply significantly greater numbers of enlistees, which is doubtful, this mobilization dependency will continue. Mobilization, as Vietnam teaches us, is not a popular political decision to make. To be effective, the conflict that the mobilization is to support must be unequivocably supported by the American people.

Preparedness also relates to securing the US base. To secure the US base obviously means continued emphasis on nuclear deterrence, maintenance of a secure and stable North America, with special emphasis on the Caribbean, a sound economy, and the active support of the American people, which is a prerequisite to the reestablishment of an effective manpower mobilization system (not necessarily a draft) and an effective industrial mobilization base. For it seems clear that so long as the United States maintains its global interests, there will be a need for some degree of mobilization to provide the manpower and strategic mobility needed to back up the active force. But manpower mobilization is not only sensitive to the requirements dictated by a more turbulent world, but even more profoundly to the current nature of the American social order and the willingness of the US citizen to make sacrifices to preserve the basic American values—not to mention a comfortable standard of living.

In turn, this places a heavy burden on the policymaker and military strategist. Before committing a single soldier, gun or bullet to a strategic concept, the strategist and policymaker must have not only thought the entire plan through, but must also thoroughly understand the nature of the conflict for which they are preparing. Crucial to the use of US arms in limited conflicts to secure national interests is the support of the American people. Many of our wars have been couched in ideological, if not messianic terms—"making the world safe for democracy" or "fighting communism anywhere, anytime." These concepts make it difficult for policymakers to select war termination goals short of total victory. Americans are also a pragmatic people, who attack distasteful jobs directly and who want to end them quickly so they can get on to other things. Because of these characteristics the advice of Clausewitz is instructive. Clausewitz teaches us that:

> . . . the first, the greatest and the most decisive act of judgment which a statesman and commander performs is that of correctly recognizing in this respect the kind of war he is undertaking, of not taking it for, or wishing to

make it, something which by the nature of the circumstances it cannot be. This is, therefore, the first and most comprehensive of all strategic questions.[10]

The final guideline and the most important by far is integration. It is the need for cohesion and coherence among the elements of political policy and military strategy at its various levels. It should be clear by now that this unity or integration does not come easily, but it is absolutely vital that it be accomplished. Today, there is a growing awareness among strategic analysts that there are potential disconnects between our strategy to counter threats to US interests in Southwest Asia and the policy that establishes the framework for that strategy. The following are cases in point.

- The decision to consider the use of force in the Persian Gulf to preserve access to oil is driven by the dependency of the United States, NATO, and Japan on that source of oil. Perhaps, the most important policy to establish with respect to our national interest in Southwest Asia is nonmilitary in nature. The technical problems associated with securing the oil fields militarily virtually insures that there will be an extended period of reduced production if force must be used; therefore, it would be better by far for all Western industrial nations and Japan to pursue nonmilitary policies that would drastically reduce their dependency on oil imports from the Persian Gulf.
- The US policy towards Israeli security is at odds with the Western need for Arab oil and, thus, hampers the development of an integrated military strategy for the region. Nevertheless, the solution of the Arab-Israeli problem would not mean that the problem of continued Western access to oil was likewise solved. Some sort of Arab-Israeli accommodation must be reached to enable the US independence of action in the Middle East and to develop an integrated strategic approach, particularly for those crises that do not involve overt Soviet military action. A Soviet military incursion can be expected to rally the more moderate Arab oil-producing states around US policy, regardless of the status of Arab-Israeli relations. Less tractable, however, would be threats to internal stability, stemming in part, perhaps, from a failure to solve the Arab-Israeli dilemma.
- If Soviet military action in the Persian Gulf becomes a reality, there are potentially serious policy-strategy problems. For example, the magnitude of the Soviet threat, the vast distances that the

United States must travel to reach the operational area, the characteristics of the operational area, and the current nature of the US force structure will require an almost immediate decision to mobilize the Reserve Components. This mobilization decision must be made very quickly after the required Soviet mobilization is discovered. Whether or not this mobilization decision is made in a timely manner, the military strategist who is developing contingency plans for Southwest Asia must make assumptions regarding mobilization, not only of people, but airlift and sealift as well. If these national military strategy assumptions are not valid, then the operational strategy developed by the theater commander will not be effective. This points to an indispensable need for key policymakers to be briefed on the principal provisions of the military's critical contingency plans for the Persian Gulf region.

• Other more general policies also impinge on US military strategy in Southwest Asia. For example, what the military strategist can count on for resources depends upon the priority established for Southwest Asia. The strategist must know the relationship of Southwest Asian contingency plans to the global strategy. This strategy should be developed by military strategists at the national military strategy level in accordance with guidance provided by the civilian leadership. This priority has been established for midterm force planning purposes, but has not been for near-term operational planning. This means that each regional operational theater commander is developing contingency plans as if his were the top priority area. This often results in an overcommitment in plans, at least, of strategic mobility assets and in the potential dual commitment of the conventional strategic reserve divisions. A global operational strategy is needed to integrate national military strategy and operational strategy.

Because of these potential policy-strategy disconnects, the United States could be constrained in the application of military power to achieve its political objectives in Southwest Asia. The maintenance of a continuous dialogue between the policymaker and military strategist must be a matter of top priority. It is imperative that the policymaker and military strategist remain close partners in the strategic process or the result will be strategic discord and the failure of the United States to achieve its political objectives or secure its national interests in Southwest Asia or elsewhere.

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This memorandum examines the interrationship of the political objectives, security policy, and military strategy as it pertains to achieving US national interests in Southwest Asia. The author reviews the major differences between Force Development Planning and Operational Planning and postulates that a lack of understanding of these differences among policymakers and strategists causes disconnects among objectives, policies, and strategy. He, then, introduces and discusses six strategic guidelines that have the potential to mitigate the adverse strategic effect of disconnects in the strategic process in the context

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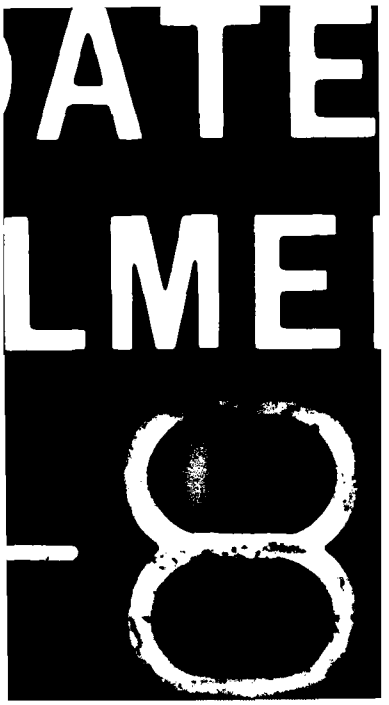
of Southwest Asia. The author concludes that potential policy-strategy disconnects could constrain the United States should military force be needed to secure US national interests in Southwest Asia.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